

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIMA 09473 091446Z

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2661

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 9473

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PE

SUBJ: GOP REQUEST FOR TERMINATION OF PEACE CORPS PUBLIC
HEALTH PROGRAM.

REFS: LIMA'S 9257, 9372, 9435, 9455

1. AT THE END OF MY NOVEMBER 6 CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER DE LA FLOR, I MENTIONED TO HIM THAT WE HAD JUST RECEIVED THE MINISTRY'S NOTE CANCELLING THE PEACE CORPS AGREEMENT WITH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH. HE SAID YES AND PRESUMED I HAD FOUND IT UNUSUAL THAT THIS AGREEMENT WAS DENOUNCED ONLY SOME TWO MONTHS AFTER THE HEALTH MINISTER AND I HAD SIGNED IT. I SAID IT DID STRIKE ME AS STRANGE. DE LA FLOR SAID THAT BECAUSE HE WAS ABOUT TO DEPART FOR THE AIRPORT HE HAD ASKED SECRETARY GENERAL GARCIA BEDOYA TO GET IN TOUCH WITH ME TO EXPLAIN THE REASONS FOR THIS DECISION BY THE GOP.

2. I TOLD DE LA FLOR THAT I COULD UNDERSTAND THE REASONS GIVEN IN THE NOTE AND PERU'S DESIRE TO REPLACE FOREIGN TECHNICIANS WITH TRAINED PERUVIANS, BUT HOPED THAT THE DECISION WOULD NOT BE LINKED TO THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN IN THE PERUVIAN PRESS AGAINST FOREIGN ORGANIZATIONS ALLEGING OR IMPLYING POLITICAL INTERVENTION BY PCV'S. I DESCRIBED THE WORK THE VOLUNTEERS WERE DOING, THEIR SELF SACRIFICE AND IDEALISM, AND THE FACT THAT THEY WERE ASSIGNED BY AND WORKING FOR PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT ENTITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH AGREEMENTS REACHED, AND ONCE AGAIN GAVE HIM MY FLAT ASSURANCES THAT THEY PLAY NO REPEAT NO POLITICAL ROLE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LIMA 09473 091446Z

WHATSOEVER. ALTHOUGH STILL UNCONVINCED THAT THERE WERE NO

INTELLIGENCE GATHERERS AMONG THE PCV'S, DE LA FLOR ACKNOWLEDGED THE GOOD WORK THE PEACE CORPS HAS DONE, SAYING THAT HE HAS PERSONALLY SEEN OUR PCV'S IN ACTION FOLLOWING THE 1970 EARTHQUAKE. HE ADDED THAT FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM QUITO HE WOULD HOPE TO HAVE A PRIVATE MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF OUR PEACE CORPS STAFF TO EXPRESS HIS APPRECIATION FOR THEIR WORK AND TO EXPLAIN THE REASONS FOR HIS GOVERNMENT'S DECISION. I TOLD HIM I THOUGHT THAT WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT IDEA AND ALSO EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT SHOULD THE CANCELLATION OF PEACE CORPS ACTIVITIES BE MISINTERPRETED BY THE PRESS, HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD STEP FORWARD TO GIVE A PUBLIC EXPLANATION OF THE MOVE ALONG THE LINES OF THAT CONTAINED IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE'S NOTE RECOGNIZING THE GOOD WORK DONE. HE SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER DOING SO.

3. IT APPEARS IN RETROSPECT THAT SOME OF DE LA FLOR'S COMMENTS PERTAINED TO A SECOND NOTE, WHICH EMBASSY RECEIVED ONLY TODAY BUT WHICH IS DATED NOVEMBER 4, CALLING FOR THE TERMINATION OF THE BASIC PEACE CORPS AGREEMENT OF 1962. TEXT OF THIS LATTER NOTE HAS BEEN SENT LIMA 9455. FURTHER TELEGRAM WILL BE SENT CONCERNING MEETING WITH SECTY GEN. GARCIA-BEDOYA NOV 8.
DEAN

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